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DE RUEHBO #0474/01 3132216
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 092216Z NOV 06
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0715
INFO RUEHSW/AMEMBASSY BERN IMMEDIATE 1202
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA IMMEDIATE 7271
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE 8424
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ NOV 8359
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA IMMEDIATE 4476
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID IMMEDIATE 9517
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE 9746
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE 0985
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO IMMEDIATE 5144
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS BOGOTA 010474

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [CO](#)

SUBJECT: FARC PUBLISHES OPEN LETTER TO PROMINENT AMERICANS

REF: BOGOTA 10337

¶1. On November 9, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) posted a letter to prominent Americans on its website (www.farcep.org). The letter, entitled, "Open Letter to the People of the United States," was addressed to academics James Petras and Noam Chomsky, political figures Jesse Jackson and Angela Davis, and media personalities Michel (sic) Moore, Oliver Stone, and Denzel Washington.

¶2. Begin informal Embassy translation of FARC letter:

Open Letter to the People of the United States

Mr. James Petras
Mr. Noam Chomsky
Mr. Jesse Jackson
Ms. Angela Davis
Mr. Michel Moore
Mr. Oliver Stone
Mr. Denzel Washington

We turn to you, as representative intellectuals and symbols of respected thought of the country of George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King, to address, through you, the people of the United States calling upon you to influence your rulers for the future of peace, justice and fraternity of all the people in the world.

On February 2003, the combat intelligence airplane manned by U.S. citizens Thomas Howes, Keith Stansell and Mark Gonsalves, was shot down by FARC guerrillas on Colombian soil, on the folds of the eastern Mountain range that extends towards Caqueta. The three were legitimately taken prisoner, while engaged in an act of war amidst an armed conflict in which the FARC-the People's Army-and the Colombian State are fighting for power.

Howes, Stansell and Gonsalves are alive in our custody, treated with respect and dignity in the jungle. They are the only North American prisoners of war alive in the world.

Washington has invested billions of dollars in the framework of the South Command (sic) Patriot Plan, attempting a dangerous and senseless military rescue. That same attitude from President Uribe caused the recent and regrettable death of a former defense minister, a governor and 8 soldiers. In fact, during these three long years the American prisoners have been subjected to unnecessary risks due to military

operations seeking to free them through blood and fire. For this reason we cannot include in this letter evidence of their survival that could bring, at least, a little peace of mind to their relatives, but we promise to do so in due time.

To the people of the United States, we ask for your always generous solidarity, to pressure President Bush and his Government to change their attitude in favor of an exchange of prisoners of war in Colombia, or a humanitarian exchange as the Narino Palace prefers to call it. We must win this battle of humanity that can also open paths for peace with social justice in this country.

Unfortunately, the hot-headed way in which President Uribe has handled the situation has sown the road with obstacles. Today, when great expectations have arisen over the swap of prisoners in Colombia, Uribe has rushed to say that an eventual exchange could not include the guerrillas "Simon Trinidad" and "Sonia" because they are in the hands of American justice.

Simon Trinidad, the FARC's political spokesman during peace talks with the Pastrana Government in the Caguan, was extradited to the United States under false charges and dirty lies from Colombian military intelligence and the Fiscalía (Prosecutor General's Office) that can never hide the retaliatory nature of that decision.

On Sonia's national ID card, noble country guerrilla, was stamped the fingerprint of a drug trafficker and they even changed her name in order to extradite her.

When she arrived in the United States she was confined for six months in a dark punishment hole. Simon has remained constantly chained and isolated and has been denied the right of legal defense before a foreign court that neither speaks his language nor has the right to try him. Even though he's not a member of the Supreme FARC Secretariat, the authorities treacherously present him as such in order to link him to an invented criminal conspiracy among which above all is terrorism.

These actions intend to weaken the FARC's resistance to the policy of neo-liberal re-colonization and the dominance of the empire in Our America, that of the South. Simon and Sonia were extradited to the United States in violation of the Constitutional guarantee which prohibits permanently the extradition of Colombian citizens for political reasons.

It is our heartfelt wish that this exchange can put an end to the long captivity of the prisoners under the control of the contending parties, including Simon, Sonia, Howes, Stansell and Gonsalves. Unless the governments of Colombia and the United States have another reasonable option regarding these prisoners to which the FARC agrees. What is important is that all of them regain their freedom.

To Noam Chomsky, to James Petras and to the people of the United States and Colombia, we invite you to raise this just banner of exchange and peace, that at the same time supports a political and diplomatic solution of the conflict. As we have said in a recent public communication addressed to the Colombian military, "social programs, structural changes, peace agreements are more effective and powerful than bullets and operations."

We would like to see a change of attitude in Washington's government. Instead of characterizing the FARC as a terrorist organization, with the slimy purpose of delegitimizing a political organization and at the same time justifying its intervention in an internal conflict, think about the universal right of the people to rise up against unjust and oppressive regimes. Simon Bolivar the Liberator has taught us that "social individuals can conspire against any proscriptive law that has been twisted" and "when power is oppressive, virtue has the right to annihilate it". "The virtuous man rises against oppressive and unbearable authority in order to replace it with respected and kind

authority."

We have confidence in the actions of the thoughtful people who love peace that live beyond the Rio Bravo, who are seeking to resolve in a civilized way the conflicts of the world and the hemisphere taking into account the dignity of the people.

Receive our best regards,

Sincerely yours,

FARC-EP, International Commission
Raul Reyes, member of the Secretariat
The Colombian Mountains, October 2006

End informal Embassy translation of FARC letter.

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